

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, AS
SUBJECT: CIVAIR: AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION POLICY
REF: (A) STATE 173965, (B) CANBERRA A-122 (BOTH NOTAL)

1. READING AUSTRALIAN PRESS IS MORE AN ART THAN A SCIENCE.
FINANCIAL REVIEW ARTICLE OF JUNE 12, REQUESTED BY REFTEL A,
HAS VERY LITTLE TO SAY ABOUT CONTENTS OF AVIATION POLICY
REVIEW, DEALING PRIMARILY WITH AT-THAT-TIME UPCOMING TALKS
WITH BRITISH. FROM WAY PIECE IS STRUNG TOGETHER, EMBASSY
BELIEVES IT TO HAVE BEEN LARGELY CONCOCTED BY REPORTER WHO
STARTED WITH BASIC FACT THAT DELEGATION WAS LEAVING FOR
LONDON BUT WAS UNABLE TO DEVELOP FURTHER HARD INFORMATION.
THIS OCCURS FAIRLY COMMONLY WITH FINANCIAL REVIEW.

2. UNDER HEADING "HOW NIXON'S CHEAP FARES WILL OPERATE,"
ARTICLE STATES THAT AUSTRALIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM WOULD
PROPOSE BULK FARE ARRANGEMENT, EXCLUSIVELY FOR QANTAS AND
BRITISH AIRWAYS (I.E., EXCLUDING FREDDIE LAKER), IN WHICH
LARGE BLOCKS OF ROUND-TRIP, AUSTRALIAN-BRITIAN SEATS WOULD BE
SOLD TO TRAVEL INDUSTRY WHOLESALERS FOR RESALE TO PUBLIC.
NO STOPEVERS WOULD BE ALLOWED, THEREBY CUTTING ALL OTHER
CARRIERS OUT OF THIS TRADE. FARES WOULD BE ABOUT A DOLS 550
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PAGE 02 CANBER 05469 120742Z

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, FEBRUARY; DOLS 750 AUGUST, SEPTEMBER,
JANUARY, AND MARCH; AND DOLS 950 FOR REMAINING FIVE MONTHS.
SOME SORT OF BULK FARE ARRANGEMENT, AS YET UNDERMINED,
MIGHT BE OFFERED TO ASIAN COUNTRIES TO ASSUAGE THEIR IRE, WITH
A POSSIBLE BULK FARE OF A DOL 450 EAST-COAST-AUSTRALIA TO
SINGAPORE BEING OFFERED TO SINGAPORE.

3. ONLY ADDITIONAL PURPORTED FACT IN ARTICLE RELATING TO AVIATION POLICY REVIEW WAS ASSERTION THAT SUBMISSION TO CABINET (SIC) INCLUDES A RECOMMENDATION THAT NOTICE BE GIVEN TO KLM, UTA, AND YUGOSLAV NATIONAL CARRIER JAT TO TERMINATE AUSTRALIAN SERVICES. OLYMPIC AIRWAYS WOULD BE WELCOMED BACK. ARTICLE STATES OF TERMINATION ASPECT, "BUT THIS OPTION IS BY NO MEANS A FAIT ACCOMPLI." EMBASSY REGARDS WHOLE THING AS HIGHLY DUBIOUS.

4. ARTICLE ALSO STATES, "THE AUSTRALIA-BRITAIN BILATERAL TALKS WERE MOUNTED FAIRLY HASTILY AND QUIETLY BECAUSE MR. NIXON WANTED TO PRESENT THE CRUX OF THE AVIATION POLICY REVIEW TO CABINET WITH BRITISH GOVERNMENT ENDORSEMENT." THOUGH STATEMENT IS EXAGGERATED, IT IS, OF COURSE, SELF-EVIDENT THAT NIXON REACHED A DECISION THAT FIRST STONE SHOULD BE PUT IN PLACE IN FORM OF BRITISH ROUTE DECISIONS BEFORE NEXT ITEMS WERE TACKLED.
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